

As noted in last year's report to the Congress, the PFP has been a critical tool in helping all the Partners, regardless of their desire to join NATO, to build stronger ties with the Alliance and develop closer cooperative relationships with all their neighbors. As you will see from the attached report, NATO Allies and Partners have managed to create a fundamentally different Partnership through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and PFP enhancements.

The EAPC and the PFP have provided means for incorporating partners into NATO's operation in Bosnia, assisting Macedonia in developing its armed forces, and by building cooperation and confidence among Partners in South-eastern Europe, which has both insulated them from the Kosovo crisis and enabled them to

help NATO deal with Kosovo's destabilizing effects. Enhancements to the PFP, which are nearly fully implemented, provide a solid foundation for closer NATO-Partner collaboration and a mechanism for Partners to develop the interoperability with NATO that will be necessary for future NATO-led Allied/Partners missions.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations.

Remarks at a Unity '98 Dinner in Boston, Massachusetts September 17, 1998

Thank you very much. Well, this has been good. [*Laughter*] I kept watching these guys come up here, just turning up the temperature one after the other. It's been really great.

Let me say to all of you, first of all, thank you for your wonderful, wonderful welcome to me and to the Vice President. I thank all the people responsible for this dinner. I thank the Schusters, the Solomonts; thank you, Jack and Lyle; all the people at the tables who did all the work—all of you, thank you so much.

I want to thank the Massachusetts Democratic Party. Joan, thank you and all of your cohorts for what you have done. I thank Steve Grossman for doing an absolutely magnificent job, and his wife, Barbara, and his family and his co-workers, for putting up with it and enduring it all these long months. It has meant more than I will ever be able to say.

I want to thank all the nominees who are here for all the offices in Massachusetts. It could be good to have "Congressman" Capuano here pretty soon down in Washington. And I want to thank especially your Attorney General, Scott Harshbarger, for making this race for Governor. And I want you to make it a good race, a winning race. It's important to America; it's important to Massachusetts; and I want you to help him.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to Tom Menino, not only for being a remarkable mayor of Boston but for being so incredibly generous with his time in showing the rest of the country, and in allowing our administration to showcase to the rest of the country, the good work that has been done in Boston, especially in trying to save the lives and build the lives of the most vulnerable children of this city. He deserves a great deal of gratitude from all of us.

I really wish I didn't have to say anything tonight because I have enjoyed so much what has already been said, and I'm afraid I'll just mess it up. But I would like to thank John Kerry for what he said and for the conviction with which he said it. He and Teresa have been very good friends to Hillary and to me. And I think that—the thing I always think about when I talk with John is, no matter what the subject is, I never finish a conversation with him that he doesn't ask whether what we're really doing is right for the children. Is it the right thing for the children? When he always points out there's something wrong with our country when the poverty rate of the children is twice the rate of poverty in the country as a whole. There is something wrong when we're not doing more to save our kids, and we're

putting too many in jail and too few in college. And that's very, very important that you have a Senator who cares about that.

I want to thank Dick Gephardt for—first of all, for never losing his energy or devotion or conviction about his work, when he went from being the majority leader to the minority leader of the House. A lesser person would simply have quit, and he didn't quit. Instead, he steeled himself for the work of the country. He knew that in some fundamental ways our country needed his leadership and our caucus to do our job, first to stop the contract on America, then to keep the deficit coming down, then to invest in our children and their future, more than ever before. And I thank him for that.

Now, I want to tell you just one thing about Senator Kennedy—Vicki may never speak to me again. But I want you to understand one thing very clearly. If you reelect him twice more, he'll break Strom Thurmond's record and become the longest serving Senator in the history of the United States of America. *[Laughter]* And comparatively, he'll still be a young man. *[Laughter]*

Today we started the day off together, Ted and I did, with the IBEW convention, talking about the Patients' Bill of Rights, talking about his fight for the minimum wage. The thing that astonishes me about him is, when Ted Kennedy came to the United States Senate, I was 15 years old—or 16 or something like that. He's still got more energy than I do, and he is still fighting with the same enthusiasm he was on the first day he showed up. That's a person who loves America and loves our people.

And finally let me say, there's not much I can't say about the Vice President that—that I can say you don't already know, maybe, but I would like you to just reflect on something. There are partisan disagreements about whether I was right or wrong and maybe just principled disagreements about whether I was right or wrong with the budget of 1993—I think the results have borne us out—or when we took on the fight with the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, or when we tried to change the welfare system but protect the most vulnerable among us, or when we took the hard decisions in Bosnia and Haiti and Mexico, and to work for peace in Northern Ireland. And people may disagree with how we've handled the peace process in the Middle East. You can disagree with a lot of things, but no one will ever be

able to dispute one clear fact about the 8 years I served as President, and that is that in those 8 years, Albert Gore of Tennessee did more good in more different areas than any Vice President in the history of the United States of America.

Now, all I've done so far is talk about political activists and politicians. I think it's a high calling. I still want children to want to grow up to be President, to be in the Senate, to be Governor, to come to fundraisers, to go to rallies, to pass out cards, to believe in the political system. But that brings me to the most important thing, because what we're really all doing here has more to do with those kids that sang to us at the beginning of this banquet tonight than it does about most of the rest of us. And the reason most of us belong to our party is that we believe that the real thrill of public service is not partisan triumph or political power but advancing the lives of people and helping them to make the most of their own lives.

So let me take just a couple of minutes; I won't take long. You know what the issues are. But I want you to ask yourself tonight, why am I here? And what shall we make of this movement? Let me give you just a little bit of a sober note here. Ever since the Civil War, in every midterm election, the party of the President has lost seats in the Congress if the President was in his second term. Now, why is that? That is usually because people perceive that the party's agenda has already been implemented to whatever extent it is, and they're beginning to get restless, whether the party was in the majority or the minority in Congress.

I'll tell you another thing that's reasonably sobering. The Republicans have an enormous advantage at midterm elections because their electorate is wealthier and older and normally more ideological and, therefore, usually more likely to turn out.

Now, what shall we make of this moment? I would argue to you we can't reverse that with a better, more ardent political speech. But we can reverse that if the American people realize that we're the only ones who want this election to be about them, that we really believe that the voters, the citizens, should be in the saddle, and that Washington should not be about politicians looking at each other and carving themselves up. It should be about people in public life looking at the American people and building

them up. That is what this election should be about.

So I say to you, you have given a great gift tonight. This gift you have given will enable us to help our House candidates and our Senate candidates who have a good chance to win—and a lot of them do—to reverse over 100 years of history, to be able to get their message out. They will help Steve Grossman to help our State parties to get the vote out on election day.

But I ask something more of you. I ask you to look into your heart and ask, what does it mean to be an American, and what should we make of this moment? It's clear what's afoot on the other side. We're 2 weeks from the beginning of a new budget year and, praise the Lord, the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years—2 weeks away. Now, our administration has had a very active year, especially in foreign policy and dealing with economic matters. I've been to China; Hillary and I have been to Africa; I have been to Russia; and we went to Northern Ireland. And you know all about that. We're working on peace, and we're working on restoring economic growth. We've done a lot here at home to advance our health care and our education agenda within the framework of the executive branch powers.

We're 2 weeks away from a new budget year. One of 13 appropriations bills has been passed. They killed campaign finance reform. They killed the tobacco reform legislation. Last night in the Senate, the leader of the Senate literally shut business down for 4 hours to keep them from being able to vote on the Patients' Bill of Rights.

And they say, "Well, you know, the country is pretty happy now. We've got the lowest unemployment, the lowest percentage of people on welfare, the lowest crime rate, the lowest everything in 25 or 30 years. Everybody is pretty happy. And we'll have a bunch of smoke up here, and we won't do much, and we won't get ourselves caught on the wrong side of the issues. But we won't pass anything that our interest groups don't want us to pass."

Now, in that mix of things, is it possible for not only us but for you, for all of us together as committed citizens, to pierce through the fog to the heart of the matter? To say that, yes, things are good, but we're living in a dynamic, fast changing world. There are a lot of big challenges out there. And the United States should use this moment—indeed, we are obligated to

use this moment to protect our own economic prosperity, as the Vice President said, by investing in the international institutions that will enable our neighbors to start growing again so they can buy what we're trying to sell; by investing in the integrity of our future by saving the Social Security system, even if it means resisting the temptation to pass a tax cut right before the election and spend a surplus that hasn't even materialized yet; by sticking up for a Patients' Bill of Rights.

That sounds good. Do you know what that means? It means very practical things to people. There are 160 million people in this country in managed care plans—160 million—and many others in other kinds of plans with limits. Our bill simply says that if you walk out of this hotel tonight and you walk across the street and you get hit by a car, no matter what your health plan is, you can go to the nearest emergency room. You don't have to drive all the way across town and risk your life doing it.

It says, if you go to your doctor and he says, "I'm sorry, you need to see a specialist," that you'll be able to see that specialist without somebody worrying about the bottom line, not a doctor, saying, "I'm sorry, you can't see the specialist."

It says, if you work for a small business and they change insurance carriers and you're pregnant or your spouse is pregnant, they can't come to you when you're 6 months pregnant and say, "I'm sorry, you've got to change your obstetrician." You get to see it all the way through until the baby is born. I want you to think—this is what I want you to talk to people about. We're talking about rules that govern 160 million of your fellow citizens.

Have you ever had anybody in your family take chemotherapy? I have. You know what it's like for a family? You sit around and wonder, well—and you make jokes about whether your hair is going to fall out and when, whether you're going to be too sick to your stomach to eat tonight, and you just wait until the end of the treatment, and you pray to God it works. What this bill says is, they can't get you two-thirds through your treatment—say, "I'm sorry, you've got to change doctors."

This bill says that at least citizens ought to have some privacy in this country in their medical records. That's important.

Now, we're for all those things, and they're not. And it affects 160 million Americans. And

43 HMO's are supporting us and say, "It's not right for us to be put out of business because we're doing the right thing."

We're for an education program. That sounds great. What does that mean? In our budget—balanced budget—we say we're going to give 100,000 teachers in this country to the school districts who need it to take the early-grade class size down to an average of 18. That will change the face of education in America. Every single study shows if you give kids, particularly kids from disadvantaged homes, the chance to have that kind of early learning, the gains are permanent.

Our plan says we're going to build or remodel 5,000 schools, so our kids will be in good, safe schools. It says we're going to have the funds to hook up all the classrooms to the Internet by the year 2000. That's what it says. It's not pie in the sky. This is not "Wouldn't it be nice if we had an education program?" We have an education program, and this election will determine whether it becomes real in the life of the American people or not.

So you don't have to remember all the other issues; you can just remember those four. Do you want to keep our economy growing by getting the world economy fixed so they can buy our stuff? Don't you want to protect the surplus and the integrity of our budget until we honor our parents and our children by saving Social Security so that when the baby boomers retire, we don't either have a substandard retirement or we put an unconscionable burden on our children and grandchildren? Wouldn't it be nice if the best medical care in the world were available to everybody with insurance instead of being at the whim of accountants' rules? And don't you really believe that when we say we're for a world-class education for everybody, now that we have the money to do it, we finally ought to start living up to what we say we believe in? That's what this is about.

Now, we can beat over 100 years of history if we are on the side of the future. Records

are made to be broken. I got home last night from the state dinner with Vaclav Havel, and I turned on the—we were in the bottom of the seventh inning between San Diego and Chicago, and the eighth inning came along and there were three people on base and two out and Sammy Sosa hit his 63d home run. We can do that. Records are made to be broken. We can do that.

But make no mistake about it: We can only do that if the people who work at this hotel, who have to struggle to keep body and soul together, who work late at night and early in the morning, on election day believe it is worth it to them to show up, because we care about them, because we're fighting for them, because we have a vision for their children's future.

If they think that, you can throw all the history records out the window, you can throw everything else out the window. This country still belongs to the people. Our party wants to give it back to them, and we want to give them a future. Your contribution has helped to give it to them; now let your voice, let the look in your eye, let the determination in how you spend your time between now and election day communicate to all the people that we have a job to do for America and we are determined to do it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 p.m. in the Imperial Ballroom at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Gerald and Elaine Schuster, Alan D. and Susie Solomont, John P. Manning, and Lyle Howland; Joan Menard, State chair, Massachusetts Democratic Party; Steve Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee, and his wife, Barbara; Mayor Michael E. Capuano of Somerville; Teresa Kerry, wife of Senator John F. Kerry; Victoria Kennedy, wife of Senator Edward M. Kennedy; and President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic. The President also referred to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).